

**APPROVED
EMPIRE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

October 19, 2021

The Empire Township Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. The meeting was held at the Empire Township Offices.

CALL TO ORDER: Dick Figura, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Dick Figura, Larry Krawczak, Micah Deegan, Erik Foged, Duane Shugart.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Dana Boomer

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The board briefly discussed the agenda. Figura stated that Paula Figura would not be presenting tonight. **Motion by Deegan, second by Foged to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None declared

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: **Motion by Shugart, second by Foged to approve the September 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

COMMUNICATIONS: There was proposed language for amendments to the airport section of the Master Plan from Claude Fields as forwarded by Larry Krawczak. This will be discussed under the Master Plan discussion. There was also an email from Tony Groves offering to re-draft the watershed overlay district ordinance. This will be discussed under the Watershed Overlay District discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Acknowledged the receipt of Cypher's monthly reports for September 2021. The PC briefly discussed. **Motion by Foged, second by Krawczak to acknowledge receipt of the September 2021 reports. All in favor, motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **Watershed Overlay District** – This was discussed at the October township board meeting. There was substantial objection to the steep slopes provisions by the Township Board, as well as other concerns including the authority granted to the Zoning Administrator and the four townships not proceeding on this overlay district together. Figura and Deegan summarized the discussion at the Township Board meeting. The Township Board sent the proposed ordinance back to the Planning Commission for additional discussion. The PC discussed. The overall consensus was that further direction is needed from the Board regarding what they will accept in an ordinance of this sort. Figura feels that the PC should also make overtures to the Glen Arbor PC to possibly hold a joint meeting of the two groups to see if there is work that can be done together.

The PC continued the discussion on potential changes to the watershed overlay district. Shugart suggested putting together a committee from the PC and Township Board to discuss this issue.

Shugart moved to form a watershed overlay district committee composed initially of Figura, Deegan and Bucky Noonan to further the discussion of the watershed overlay district. Deegan seconded. All in favor, motion carried. The PC determined that until there is further conversation with the Township Board, there is no real use in having Tony Groves re-write the ordinance. **Krawczak moved to ask Tony Groves, Rob Karner, or another member of the Glen Lake Association to join the watershed overlay district committee. Foged seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

Figura asked if there were additional concerns raised at the board meeting that the members of the public present remembered. Members of the public present thanked the PC for their work and expressed an interest in continuing to work on the ordinance. Rob Karner stated that the focus on the latitude given to the Zoning Administrator was meant to acknowledge that each property is unique while still supporting the need to protect the watershed.

- B. **Master Plan Review** – Paula Figura was not able to make it to tonight’s meeting to discuss broadband. She will be rescheduled for the November meeting.

Boomer had sent out an initial red-line version of the Master Plan, with a suggestion to focus on the re-organization of the original “The Human Environment” section. The PC discussed the reorganization of the section. The PC would like to see an updated Table of Contents, a consolidation of information related to the parks and recreation, and the utilities/services should be expanded with additional information on broadband and the ability for citizens to work from home. The PC discussed encouraging the ability to work from home, and when it turns from working from home to having a business from the home.

The next step is to flesh out the long-term objectives for the Transportation and Utilities and Services sections. The PC will consider these and send ideas for these sections to Boomer, who will integrate them into the Master Plan for discussion at the November meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Revised Bylaws** – These were approved in September; no discussion. This will be removed from the agenda.
- B. **Pleasure of the Board** – The PC briefly discussed the meeting schedule. The November meeting is the last one scheduled for 2021. Boomer will bring a proposed 2022 meeting schedule to the November meeting, with 2022 meetings in February through November, with July and August on break. Deegan stated that regarding the overlay district, Bucky Noonan discussed that many of the septic fields are overused with short-term rentals. Rob Karner then asked if the township would be amenable to a change in the septic ordinance to more stringently regulate short-term rentals. Deegan is unsure how this would be done without licensing short-term rentals. Deegan wanted to mention that this was brought up at the Township Board meeting. There are a number of issues regarding this; the PC briefly discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BOARD COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT: **Motion** by Krawczak to adjourn at 7:36 pm, Shugart seconded. With no objection, Figura adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Boomer

Recording Secretary